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# Year of the wives

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# The Year Of The Wives

Every five years or so, the Firm invites the wives of its principals to hang up their aprons and come with their husbands to an Eastern resort for the annual Principals' Meeting. Freed for a few days from home responsibilities and the demands of young America, they have a chance to get to know each other and the organization that has a bearing on their family's way of life and future prospects.

The scene this year was the venerable Lake Placid Club in the Adirondack Mountains, which managed to hold in ample comfort 360 principals and 317 wives from offices throughout the U.S.A., Japan and Latin America (but not from Canada, where the DPH&S principals' meeting fell on the same dates).

The mountain fastnesses of New York State aren't easy for such a large group to get to. The H&S special train which took 204 travelers in twelve sleepers up and back by fits and starts was late both ways. When they arrived at the Club they found Art Feil, who makes the arrangements for these meetings, pacing about like an expectant father in a maternity hospital.

The meeting each year is focused on some particular subject area, and perhaps it was fitting in the year of the wives that the subject was effective communication. The partners will also devote a day to it at their meeting in October. Besides the customary administrative and technical sessions, one afternoon was given over to communications between staff and management. Professor David K. Berlo of Michigan State reminded his listeners that "when you become a principal, you get into the people business. To get ahead you have to be as good at it as you are at accounting."

Communications break down, he said, from "selective exposure" (we listen for only what we want to hear) and "selective perception" (we distort what we see till it matches what we want or expect). He proposed, as a new substitute for the Golden Rule, that we should "Do unto others as they would

have themselves done unto."

After Dr. Berlo had opened windows onto new ways of looking at communications, a panel of principals considered live cases, disguised, of actual personnel problems. Irwin (Rusty) Rust, its chairman (see † page 12), summed up the conclusions: "These problems all started with a breakdown in communication—a failure to see the other man's needs."

Jerry Tucker and Don LaBoskey, personnel directors for our two largest offices, New York and Los Angeles respectively, concluded the session. No one appreciates anything more than a sincere "talk with the boss," they said, to find out "How am I doing? How can I improve? What will happen if I do?"

While their husbands were being thus motivated, the wives were pursuing activities organized by Gerry Swormstedt and her committee, or just relaxing with or without help from Pat Tufer and her hospitality committee.

There were optional sightseeing, shopping and sports. (Carole Dahlenburg won ladies golf with a 9-hole 60, while Dougal Crowe's 78 won the men's event). Praiseworthy talent was in evidence at the Hobby Show organized by Judy Sullivan and Vi Blair. Tuesday night there was a banquet and dancing.

Mr. Queenan spoke to the wives about what the Firm hoped they would take away from the meeting: "an understanding of the spirit of H&S and what it attempts to accomplish." He told them of their husbands' responsibilities and how each one can make or break the reputation of the Firm. And he spoke of what wives could do to help—in building prestige for their husband and the Firm, taking an interest in his work and helping him avoid worry.

"Your husbands are among the leaders of our organization," he concluded. "Won't you help them and encourage them in their dedication, and whenever you have the opportunity, say with pride, 'My husband is a principal of Haskins & Sells.'"